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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 13 titles deal with the following topics: (1) developmental differences in preschoolers' comprehension of WH-questions; (2) discourse analysis and early literacy in minority education; (3) effects of text structure on comprehension and recall in adult readers of English as a foreign language; (4) the writing proficiency of ESL and monolingual English writers at three grade levels; (5) language philosophy in composition theory and its pedagogical implications for native and nonnative English speakers; (6) comprehension skills of black and white good readers; (7) effects of sociodramatic play on language development of rural Appalachian kindergarten children; (8) teaching language arts and social studies in inner-city schools; (9) effectiveness of supplementary computer assisted instruction in reading; (10) math and reading anxiety among Mexicans, Hispanic immigrants, and Anglo-Saxon children; (11) cohesion in the writing development of native and nonnative English speakers; (12) the relationship between learning style and cognitive style in nontraditional college reading students; and (13) teachers' responses to children's use of nonstandard English during reading instruction. (HTH)

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Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Bell, Gregory Ernest
DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN PRESCHOOLERS' COMPREHENSION OF WH-QUESTIONS

Collins, James Phillip
A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON MINORITY EDUCATION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND EARLY LITERACY

Ezzaki, Abdelkader
THE EFFECTS OF TEXT STRUCTURE ON THE COMPREHENSION AND RECALL OF ADULT READERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Grubb, Melvin Harrel
THE WRITING PROFICIENCY OF SELECTED ESL AND MONOLINGUAL ENGLISH WRITERS AT THREE GRADE LEVELS

Howard, Rebecca Moore
LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY IN COMPOSITION THEORY AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

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Mhloyi, Gilford Dexter
TEACHING LANGUAGE ARTS AND SOCIAL STUDIES IN INNER-CITY SCHOOLS: TWO CASE STUDIES

Ortmann, Lois Nentwich
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPLEMENTARY COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION IN READING AT THE 4-6 GRADE LEVEL

Saltoun, Myra Debborah
MATH AND READING TEST ANXIETY AMONG THREE POPULATIONS: MEXICANS, HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS, AND ANGLO-SAXON CHILDREN

Scarcella, Robin Cameron
COHESION IN THE WRITING DEVELOPMENT OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Siebenman, Jeanne Bourbon
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING STYLE AND COGNITIVE STYLE IN NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE READING STUDENTS

Washington, Valerie Moss
TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO CHILDREN'S USE OF NONSTANDARD ENGLISH DURING READING INSTRUCTION

DEVELOPMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN PRESCHOOLERS' COMPREHENSION OF WH-QUESTIONS

Order No. DA8418914

BELL, GREGORY ERNEST, PH.D. *The Ohio State University*, 1984. 150pp. Adviser: Dr. Roger T. Cunningham

This study was designed to investigate: (1) preschoolers' comprehension of five types of wh-questions (who, what, why, where, and when); (2) whether there were differences in response types to why, where, and when questions which could be attributed to age level; and (3) whether possible patterns could be determined based on the frequency of inappropriate responses to the five types of wh-questions. Eighty Urban Black preschool boys and girls between the ages of three and five years were divided into four age groups (early 3's; late 3's; early 4's; and late 4's) with 10 boys and 10 girls in each group. In order to assess their performance, there were two sets of pictorial stimuli utilized: Single option Stimulus, designed such that only the information to answer the wh-question was presented and Multiple Option Stimulus, designed such that more than one type of wh-question could be answered. Significant differences were revealed for age, stimulus option, wh-word type, and interactions of age x wh-word type and sex x wh-word type. Qualitative differences were found in response type patterns to why, where, and when questions. There was also a pattern of inappropriate responses revealed.

A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE ON MINORITY EDUCATION: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND EARLY LITERACY

Order No. DA8413349

COLLINS, JAMES PHILLIP, PH.D. *University of California, Berkeley*, 1983. 274pp.

This dissertation is concerned with the role of language in early education. It uses methods and concepts developed in the analysis of narrative and conversational discourse to explore the nature of communication in formal learning environments and to identify some of the discourse skills children must learn in the process of becoming literate. The argument has a complex structure: It combines a general discussion of the role of language and communication in social process with a detailed discussion of several empirical studies. Chapter one treats the language-society nexus. It is a general discussion of attempts to reconcile the study of macroscopic sociological variables, such as race and class, with the study of linguistic variables and microscopic interactional variables, such as setting and task. Chapter two continues the discussion with a detailed consideration of the way linguistic forms and contextual variables influence the assessment of reference and illocution in discourse. This provides a general sociolinguistic framework for discussing the complexities of discourse in education settings. The chapter concludes with a presentation of two studies of communicative mismatch, one analyzing spoken and written narratives, the other reading group interaction, and both developed out of a larger ethnographic study of communication in the school and home. Chapters three through five discuss different aspects of the second major empirical research, a field study of an urban school and community. Chapter three elaborates the discussion of reference and illocution in classroom communication by reviewing current models of classroom discourse and examining the effects of teaching styles and grouping practices on contexts for learning. Chapter four takes up the issue of (classroom) independent measures of discourse skill, discussing a narrative experiment designed to assess children's control of aspects of anaphora and comparing the findings with standardized measures of reading skill. Chapter five situates the classroom and independent measures vis a vis the subjects' sociocultural background, tracing three effects of social class--on motivation, institutional grouping, and parental strategies. It concludes with a discussion of the need to combine large-scale studies of social structure with small-scale studies of communicative process.

THE EFFECTS OF TEXT STRUCTURE ON THE COMPREHENSION AND RECALL OF ADULT READERS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE Order No. DA8419756

EZZAKI, ABDELKADER, PH.D. *Temple University*, 1984. 251pp. Major Adviser: Professor Marjorie S. Johnson

The purpose of the present study was (a) to investigate the effects of theme inclusion/placement and the hierarchical structure of text on the comprehension and recall of expository prose by college readers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and (b) to determine the way in which these textual factors interact not only with each other, but also with a reader variable: EFL proficiency. In addition, the study sought to determine whether the relative sensitivity to the high-level information (the levels-effect hypothesis) found in recall research holds for a conventional measure of comprehension (cloze procedure).

The subjects were 225 Moroccan college students from different levels of EFL proficiency. Three expository passages were analyzed into their content structures using Meyer's (1975) procedure and these structures were divided into two hierarchical categories: High and Low. The passages were presented in three theme versions: Theme-Before-Text, Theme-After-Text and Text-No-Theme. The experimentation involved a cloze task and a recall task. The subjects' cloze responses were evaluated using a taxonomy that yielded scores for the Acceptable Word, the Syntactic, the Semantic and the Discourse Acceptability of the miscues. The recall data were scored for the presence or absence of idea units. The data of both tasks were analyzed in a repeated measures ANOVA design.

The major findings were as follows: (1) Initial thematization improves the cloze comprehension of EFL readers, especially the ones with higher proficiency. It facilitates the encoding process and sensitizes the reader to the discourse-level constraints. No such facilitative effect occurs in recall. (2) The preferential recall of the high-level information applies to non-native as well as native readers of English. However, this type of information seems to be more difficult to integrate at the discourse level. Thus, the levels-effect hypothesis was not supported on all aspects of cloze comprehension. (3) The sensitivity to high-level information can be enhanced by initial thematization and is a function of the reader's proficiency.

Overall, the findings suggest that the sensitivity to textual features is a function of the reader characteristics, the task demands and the aspects of comprehension considered.

THE WRITING PROFICIENCY OF SELECTED ESL AND MONOLINGUAL ENGLISH WRITERS AT THREE GRADE LEVELS

Order No. DA8408810

GRUBB, MELVIN HARREL, ED.D. *University of California, Los Angeles*, 1983. 286pp. Chair: Professor Laura Means Pope

This study compared the writing of ESL students with the writing of monolingual English students in terms of organizational type (coherence) and level of content (abstraction). The sample was fifth, eighth, and ninth grade students from a large metropolitan school district.

All student writing samples were first scored holistically. The ESL population was narrowed to only limited-English-proficient (LEP) students whose holistic scores were matched by grade and sex to monolingual scores. All sample papers were then evaluated as to organization and level of content. The model to determine organization was developed by Phillip C. Gonzales and Grubb and based on the research of Vygotsky and Applebee. The model to determine level of content, also developed by Phillip C. Gonzales and Grubb, consists of five levels of abstraction related to written composition.

The questions studied were: When LEP students were compared to monolingual English students (1) to what extent were holistic scores influenced by content level, organizational type, and CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) scores for total reading and total language; (2) to what extent were content level and organizational

type a function of grade level; and (3) did the content level employed and the organizational type used covary?

A rather consistent finding in the study was the lack of significant differences between LEP and monolingual students once other variables were controlled. The highest correlations with holistic scores were with reading and language ability. It was also shown that as abilities in organizational type, content level, and CTBS scores increased so did the holistic scores. Grade was found to be positively related to content level and organizational type as were reading and language. Content level and organizational type were found to move together in a positive manner. A finer analysis of the four language groups, English, Spanish, Japanese, and Korean, showed the relationship between content level and organizational type with the holistic scores was not altered by the language group of the individual.

LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY IN COMPOSITION THEORY AND ITS PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH Order No. DA8417557

HOWARD, REBECCA MOORE, PH.D. *West Virginia University*, 1984. 269pp.

Two common courses are commonly adopted for the dispensation of non-native speakers of English (L2) in college composition. One is to enroll the L2 in classes designed for native speakers (L1); the other is to separate the L2 into special sections. A third alternative is possible, however: to design a composition course that satisfies the needs of both L1 and L2.

Prevailing philosophy of language has prevented this third alternative from being realized; L2 are deemed incapable of producing the necessary rhetoric and language. Linguistic determinism, which sees language as a determiner of world view and cognition, yields a belief that rhetoric varies from culture to culture to such an extent that L2 cannot learn American rhetoric as quickly as L1. Literary organicism, whose concern with form is artistic, searching for the most perfect linguistic expression of any given semantic datum, combines with linguistic determinism to produce a preoccupation with and over-valuation of Standard Written English; thus L2 are not considered capable of producing acceptable language.

Neither of these philosophical interpretations has any proven validity with regard to freshman composition, however. On the contrary, the preponderance of scientific evidence militates strongly against linguistic determinism. In addition, literary organicism is more appropriate to the study of literature than to composition instruction; linguistic organicism, describing form for its own sake, is the more apt philosophy for composition praxis.

With linguistic determinism and literary organicism set aside, a college composition pedagogy is possible in which L1 and L2 work together and learn from each other in group inquiry classes. When a communicative standard of English usage instead of one based on social prestige is applied to their writing, the performances of L1 and L2 are approximately equal. One of the most important products of such a pedagogy is that both teachers and students are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of an internationally rather than provincially based ideal of English usage, one that is appropriate and important to the present international status of the English language.

AN ANALYSIS OF COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF BLACK AND WHITE GOOD READERS Order No. DA8411744

LEWIS, SHIRLEY BUSH, ED.D. *University of Pittsburgh*, 1983. 152pp.

The purpose of this study was to determine how seventh-grade good readers' comprehension processes vary according to the California Achievement Test reading ability levels, race and sex. The investigator hypothesized that: (a) there were no significant differences among good readers' categorization, paraphrasing, global comprehension and sequencing abilities; and (b) there were no significant differences among good readers' ability to utilize phonological, syntactic, and semantic clues in completing a closure task. To test the hypotheses forty-four seventh-grade good readers were administered the Test of Reading Comprehension and a seventh grade equivalency cloze procedure. The analysis of variance of the test results and Scheffe's statistical method showed that: (a) no significant differences were revealed in categorization, paraphrasing, and global comprehension abilities; (b) a significant difference occurred on sentence sequencing skills with black females scoring higher than black males, white males, or white females; and (c) a significant difference occurred on the cloze procedure with ninth stanine ability level students scoring higher than the sixth stanine ability level students. The findings suggest that good readers, regardless of race and sex, process written information in a similar manner and that the better readers utilize language processing skills more proficiently. The fact that black females sequenced sentences better than the other groups suggest that they may utilize semantic and syntactical interrelationships more effectively for organizing written information. The writer suggests that there is a need for additional research on language processing skills of middle-grade students.

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIODRAMATIC PLAY ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL APPALACHIAN KINDERGARTEN HIGH-POTENTIAL CHILDREN Order No. DA8408235

LONG, JULIANN SMITH, PH.D. *University of South Florida*, 1983. 111pp. Major Professor: Dr. Dorothy A. Sisk

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of sociodramatic play as a means of enhancing the language development of rural, Appalachian kindergarten children, with a special emphasis on high-potential children, defined as those children with a total or subtest score in the top quartile on the Metropolitan Readiness Test. It is believed that many of these children will eventually be identified as gifted.

The sample consisted of eighty kindergarten children in four classrooms. These classes were randomly assigned to experimental or control conditions. A quasi-experimental design was employed, due to the lack of random assignment of subjects. To strengthen this design, the equivalence of the experimental and control groups and of the high-potential children within each group was established statistically with a series of t tests using data from the MRT, the verbal expression scale of the ITPA and a language sample. The experimental treatment consisted of nine weeks of training in sociodramatic play. It was hypothesized that this training would enhance the language development of the experimental children relative to the control children when that development was measured with the verbal expression scale of the ITPA and with a language sample. Significant results were obtained for the verbal expression scale but not for the language sample. It was further hypothesized that the experimental treatment would have a unique effect on the language development of the high-potential children. Using the same measures, these results were not significant statistically.

It was concluded that perhaps the subjects were more comfortable with the verbal expression scale as it is similar to the individual diagnostic testing often done in kindergarten; whereas, speaking into a cassette recorder may have been intimidating. The lack of significant results for the high-potential children was thought to be a result of several possible factors: lack of rewards for advanced verbal skills, preoccupation with children of lesser potential and emphasis on conformity.

TEACHING LANGUAGE ARTS AND SOCIAL STUDIES IN INNER-CITY SCHOOLS: TWO CASE STUDIES Order No. DA8417334

MILOYI, GILFORD DEXTER, PH.D. *University of Pennsylvania*, 1984. 151pp. Supervisor: Dr. Richard A. Gibboney

This study comparatively examined the teaching-learning processes used, and the home-school relationships in two inner-city schools. Classroom observations, teacher interviews, and information obtained from school-related documents provided the main source of data for the study.

The study was conducted at Harriet Tubman and Shortridge elementary schools both of which deserve to be called 'good schools' based on their students' scores on standardized tests. Eight classrooms were observed and sixteen teachers were interviewed. Each classroom was continuously observed for five hours a day for a period of one school week. During observations, informal interviews with the teacher being observed were carried out. Snowball sampling techniques were used to get teachers for formal interviewing at the later stages of the study.

There is ample evidence from the information gathered in the study which supports the conclusion that, in essence, the teaching methods used and the content taught at either school are not quite different. The differences become pronounced when the emphasis of each is examined based on the different philosophical and historical backgrounds of the two schools. Content taught at Harriet Tubman is locally oriented and designed to improve the image of one group of people in society of which its students are a member. Knowledge imparted at Shortridge is of general significance and is designed for the use of the individual student in relation to the larger environment.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPLEMENTARY COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION IN READING AT THE 4-6 GRADE LEVEL

Order No. DA8408204

ORTMANN, LOIS NENOWICH, ED.D. *University of the Pacific*, 1983. 161pp.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of supplementary computer-assisted instruction in raising the reading achievement of Chapter I pupils in grades 4, 5 and 6. There were 340 subjects in the sample, students in the Manteca Unified School District. Subjects were assigned to either the Experimental or Control Group based on their Reading Subtest scores on the *Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills*.

The experiment was a non-randomized, pre-test/posttest design. Variables included each pupil's grade level, sex and ethnicity. The pre-test was the 1980 administration of the *CTBS*, Form S, and the posttest was the 1982 administration of the same test.

Analysis of variance and analysis of covariance were used to examine each pupil's raw score, percentile rank and reading grade placement. Scores on the Vocabulary and Comprehension Subtests were examined separately.

The results of the analyses showed that supplementary computer-assisted instruction in reading may be an effective method of raising reading achievement in some pupils. Data from this study indicate that neither sex nor ethnicity are reliable predictors of reading achievement. Pupils at different grade levels made comparable gains. There was a greater difference between the pre-test scores of high and low achieving Hispanics than between those of high and low achieving Anglos. After a year of supplementary CAI, the low achieving Hispanics made greater gains in reading than the low achieving Anglos who had received the same instruction.

MATH AND READING TEST ANXIETY AMONG THREE POPULATIONS: MEXICANS, HISPANIC IMMIGRANTS, AND ANGLO-SAXON CHILDREN

SALTOUN, MYRA DEBBORAH, PH.D. *University of Southern California*, 1984. Chairman: Professor Dennis Hocevar

This dissertation examines test anxiety in three populations of elementary school children: Mexicans living in Mexico, Hispanic immigrants living in the United States, and American school children. The subjects were 370 second grade students and 385 fifth grade students, (approximately 125 in each grade level from each population). Twelve classrooms in each grade level were utilized. Pupils were administered the Test Anxiety Scale for Children (TASC) combined with the Defensiveness Scale (DSC) by classrooms to determine the test anxiety level of each population. Questions distinguishing math from reading test anxiety were incorporated. Additionally, three sections of the CTBS were given: Reading Vocabulary, Math Computation, and Math Applications. All tests were given in either Spanish or English depending on the child's dominant language. Correlational analysis and Analysis of Covariance were used to study the relationships between test anxiety and six variables: race, sex, grade level, number of years immigrant children lived in the U.S., reading achievement, and math achievement. A number of significant relationships were hypothesized and generally confirmed. New immigrants who had resided in the U.S. less than two years admitted to greater test anxiety than immigrants who had resided in the U.S. longer than two years. Mexican children were the most test anxious followed by the Hispanic immigrants residing in the U.S. Anglo children had the least amount of anxiety and the greatest achievement. Generally, females had a greater anxiety level than males, but males were more defensive in admitting to their anxiety. Moreover, second grade children were less test anxious than fifth grade students. The total population revealed that they felt more anxious about math tests than reading tests. Finally, a number of significant anxiety correlations between and within subject areas, i.e., math, reading, were found. The calculated reliability coefficients suggested that the subscales used were appropriate for each ethnic group and the total population. Implications of these findings for future research were reported.

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COHESION IN THE WRITING DEVELOPMENT OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

SCARCELLA, ROBIN CAMERON, PH.D. *University of Southern California*, 1984. Chairman: Professor Elaine Andersen

This dissertation examines cohesive devices in the expository essays of native and non-native English speakers. The goals of the study were: (1) to determine how native English speakers use cohesive devices to accomplish cohesion and coherence; and (2) to explore the effect of first language background and second language proficiency on the use of cohesive devices by adult second language learners.

The data base consisted of 30 native English speaker essays and 30 non-native English speaker essays. The native English speaker essays were further divided into high and low proficiency groups. The non-native English speaker essays were divided into groups based on second language proficiency (beginning and advanced) and first language background (Japanese, Korean, Romance, and Taiwanese). The essays were analyzed for cohesive devices using a modified version of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy. The devices examined included conjunctive ties (such as *first* and *second*), lexical ties (such as synonyms and repetitions), and reference ties (such as *this* and *he*).

The results suggest that the number of cohesive devices is not what determines cohesive, coherent text. High proficiency native English speaking writers did not use significantly more cohesive devices than low proficiency native English speakers. However, they used alternative structural and pragmatic means of achieving cohesion and coherence. In addition, they skillfully alternated cohesive devices to avoid redundancy, prevent ambiguity, and sustain topical continuity. In contrast to low proficiency writers (who relied heavily on explicit devices such as conjunctives), high proficiency writers preferred more subtle, implicit devices (such as lexical ties).

In line with these native English speaker results, beginning and advanced second language learners did not use significantly different numbers of cohesive devices. However, second language learners of different first language backgrounds used significantly different proportions of specific cohesive ties (including conjunctives, synonyms, and reference ties). While the study does not directly examine language transfer, these results suggest that the first language may have a significant, though perhaps very subtle, effect on the non-native English speaker's production of cohesive, coherent text.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING STYLE AND COGNITIVE STYLE IN NONTRADITIONAL COLLEGE READING STUDENTS

Order No. DA8415485

SIEBENMAN, JEANNE BOURBON, ED.D. *Arizona State University*, 1984. 158pp.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between cognitive style and learning style. A secondary purpose was to investigate in what ways nontraditional college reading students felt their preferred learning styles were being met in the college setting. The Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT) was used to determine cognitive style because field-independence/dependence holds a substantial lead over any other dimension of cognitive style in extent and quality of research. The Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS) was selected to measure learning style for its emphasis on identifying adult preferences in a working and/or learning environment. In addition, qualitative data were collected by interviewing subjects to determine in what ways they thought their preferred learning styles were being met in the college setting.

The 30 subjects of the study were all students at Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, Arizona. Since many nontraditional learners are felt to need remedial or supportive aid to merge into the academic mainstream, the subjects were, at the time of this study or in the previous semester, enrolled in a college reading skills class. The subjects were minorities, older returning students and a few traditional students. The majority were considered nontraditional college students.

The GEFT and PEPS were administered and scored. T ratios were computed using field-independence/dependence scores and the means of the 20 learning style variables. None of the t ratios exceeded the critical value to reveal significance. Point-Biserial correlation coefficients were computed between the scores of those who were clearly field-independent or field-dependent and their learning style scores to determine strength of relationships. Relationships were found, but were not statistically significant.

Twenty-two subjects were interviewed as to how they felt their learning preferences were being met in the college setting. Their responses were recorded, coded and analyzed and five conceptual generalities emerged. (1) Few field-independents viewed the college experience as hostile. (2) Field-dependent at some time in their college experienced viewed it at least partially hostile. (3) All subjects viewed the PEPS and GEFT results as a validation and reassurance of their individuality. (4) Learning efficiently and effectively was tied to instructors or effort the student had put into the class. (5) The small college environment was viewed as compensatory for areas where learning style preferences were not met.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO CHILDREN'S USE OF NONSTANDARD ENGLISH DURING READING INSTRUCTION

Order No. DA8418869

WASHINGTON, VALERIE MOSS, ED.D. *University of Massachusetts*, 1984. 136pp. Director: Professor Bailey Jackson

This research examined interactive behavior between teachers and children during reading instruction. The major focus of this study was teachers' responses to pupils' use of nonstandard English during reading instruction.

The purposes of the study were: (1) To identify and classify teachers' responses to pupils' use of nonstandard English; (2) To assess a possible cause and effect relationship between teacher knowledge and attitude about nonstandard English and their responses to children's nonstandard miscues during reading instruction; (3) To determine whether teachers' responses differ depending on the more or less frequent presence of nonstandard features in pupils' speech.

The final sample upon which statistical analysis was based consisted of two teachers and their respective second grade classes, totalling fifty-eight pupils.

Each teacher was tested using the Test of Black English for Teachers of Bidialectal Students (TBETB) to determine her knowledge of structure and language arts pedagogy regarding Black English and her attitude toward it. A sentence repetition task determined the extent of dialect use of each child. During reading instruction, children's oral reading miscues and teachers' responses were recorded manually and on audiotape. Data were reported using percentages, means, miscue rates, Pearson Product Moment Correlations and Analysis of Variance.

Teachers were sufficiently different, according to the TBETB, to compare interactions with pupils during reading instruction. Negative attitudes toward Black English were not evident for either.

Teacher One was less knowledgeable about Black English; she had more negative responses than Teacher Two for nonstandard English miscues. Both teachers responded differentially to children depending on the extent of nonstandard English use; however the responses of Teacher One were more limited and negative toward the children classified as strong nonstandard English speakers.

The most frequently occurring responses were "no response" and "teacher supplies correction" for standard and nonstandard English reading miscues.

Teachers did differ in their responses to nonstandard English oral reading miscues. This differential behavior may be due to lack of knowledge about the nonstandard form and about effective language and reading instructional strategies.

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